The Copy of a

# LETTER,

FROM

Lieutenant Colonell JOHN LILBURNE, to a friend

KIND FREIND,

THe many ingagements I owe to you, ties me to give you an account according to your desire how things are with mee; Yesterday being Thursday, the 24 of this present July, I was commanded to attend upon the Committee of Examinations, which at the Inner Court of Wards I did; and after that the Committee of Common-Counsell men, that use to sit at Salters Hall was called, and as I conceive, had given in their papers about Sir *John Ecmballs* business, &c. divers other Witnesses were called in, and amongst others, one Mrs *Hanna Jenks* going in, desired the Committee to clear the roome of Mr. *Cole* the Speakers man and that hee might be put out of doors, being an enemy to the things shee had to declare, and at her second time being called in, as soon as the doore was opened, shee spake; *Gentlemen, I will not come into you, till Mr.* Cole *be put out of doore, for it is not faire, that my enemies should be present, and my freinds kept out*; so hee was commanded to withdraw, and when it came to my turn to be called in, which was long first, Mr. *Corbit* being in the Chaire, our proceedings, so neer as I can remember, were as followeth.

Lieutenant Colonell *Lilburn*, I am commanded by the House to demand this question of you; Whether did not you upon the 19. of this present *July*, being Saturday, at *Westminster*, say? That there were high and great things discovered concerning divers Members of the House of Commons, which reached as high as to the Speaker, who from his own hands had sent Threescore Thousand pounds to the King to *Oxford*; unto which I replyed; *Sir, I am a Prisoner committed by the House of Commons, but*

*know not wherefore, I shall therefore humbly desire to know the cause of my committment, and then I shall Answer you*; unto which he said very angerly; *Sir, The House is not bound to declare unto you the cause wherefore they commit you*; unto which I said, *Then truly I have been a long time mistaken, and so indeed I have, for had thought that the Parliament had had no Rule but their owne will I have walked by, I should never have drawn my sword for them; and for my part, I know no difference betwixt Tyranny and such proceedings; therefore I pray read the* Petition of Right, *and the Act made this present Parliament, whereby the Star-chamber and High-commission.*

Sir, saith Mr. *Corbit*, wee expect from you a positive answer to the Question, and command you to give it. Well Sir, then to it I answer thus, *I am a free-man, yea, a free-borne Denizen of* England, *and I have been in the field with my sword in my hand, to venture my life and my blood (against Tyranny) for the preservation of my Freedome, and I doe not know that ever I did an act in all my life that disfranchised me of my Freedome, and by vertue of being a free-man, I conceive I have as true a right to all the privileges that doe belong to a free-man, as the greatest man in* England, *whatsoever he be, whether Lord or Commoner, and the ground and foundation of my Freedome, I build upon the* Grand Charter *of* England, *which is published and expressed in the 9. of* H. 3. cap. 1. *which I humbly crave leave to read unto this Honourable Committee*; And having obtained leave, I read as followeth.

*No Free-man may be taken and imprisoned, and disseased of his free-hold, or his liberty, or his free Customes, or Out-lawed, or Banished, or any way destroyed, neither will we goe upon him, neither passe upon him, but by the lawfull tryall of his equalls, or by the Law of the Land, Justice and Right we will sell to none, we will deny to none, nor will defer to none.* Sir, the Priviledges contained herein, is my *Birth-right* and Inheritance, which Priviledges have been ratified and confirmed to the free People of *England* this present Parliament, and many Declarations put out against the King for violating of them.

*Yet notwithstanding, since the first of May last, I have by Authority from the House of Commons, been three times imprisoned, before ever I knew mine accuser, or mine accusation, or ever was suffered to speake one word in mine owne defence, which I humbly conceive, is*

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contrary to Magna Carta, and those priviledges that I ought to enjoy by vertue of my having an Interest therein; and now I am imprisoned by vote of the whole House, I know not wherefore, therefore till it be made known unto me wherefore I am imprisoned, I shall not answer to any of your Interrogatories at all. Unto which Mr. Corbit, as also Mr. Whittaker replyed.

Mr. Lilburne, be advised in your expressions, and take heed what you say in this nature: Gentlemen, I humbly thank you for your caution given me, but for your advice, I desire you to keep it to your selves, for I conceive I know well enough what I say, and truly, that rough and hard dealing that I find from the Parliament and their Officers, forceth me to express my self as I doe; for I beseech you, give me leave to tell you, that I was never so affronted and abused in my life amongst my friends, as I was by your Sergeant at Ames, when he apprehended me, who at the going into the hall, took me by my sword belt, and drag'd, and pull'd, and shook me, giving me such language, as if I had been the arrantest Roague or Raskall in the World, and when I was out of the Hall, where I civilly (understanding the nature of a Prisoner) disarmed my selfe, and was giving my sword into the hands of my friend, to carry home to my wife, as my own proper goods, he would needs by force and violence rob me of it, saying it was his, and he would have it, so that I was forced to scuffle to preserve my selfe from being rob'd of my own proper goods, and all this he did unto me, having no warrant at all about him, to meddle with me, nor I not offering the least affront in the world unto him.

Time was hee used your enemies, to my knowledge, ten times milder; for when Captaine Hide drew his sword in Westminster Hall, of purpose to make an uproare there, whom I disarmed, and brought both him and his Sword up to the House of COMMONS door, and by comamnd of divers Members, delivered them both to the Sergeant, yet immediately after, during the time of a Conferrence, he let both him and his sword goe to his Comrades in Westminster Hall, who being no sooner there amongst them, but he occasioned almost a 100. of them to draw, and fall to slashing and cutting, having driven the naked people up the very Parliament staires, with a resolution (for any thing I could perceive) to cut all your throats in the House, for the preventing of which, Sir Rich. Wiseman, my selfe, and divers other Citizens with our swords in our hands, freely adventured our lives.

Hereupon Mr. *Lile* stept up, and very soberly expressed himself to this effect; Mr. *Corbit*, *I* desire to know whether or no Mr. *Lilburne* intends by way of Petition to declare these expressions of his to the House? or whether he intends hereby some other way, as to cast an aspersion of injustice upon the whole House of Commons, and to shew his refractarines to answer to their Interrogatories; unto which *I* replyed; *Sir, For Petitioning the House, I have no intention to doe it about this businesse; having Petitioned long enough to no purpose already in another case; and as for your other expressions, I humbly conceive my words are plaine, and he that reads them, may easily understand them, and if you can expresse them plainer then they are already written, and reach my sense and meaning, I shall willingly subscribe my hand to them, or if you please to give me Pen, Ink and Paper, I shall write mine own words my self, and my name at the bottome of them*; whereupon divers of them wished me to take heed what I did: I told them; *Gentlemen, I speak not the words of rashnes, or inconsiderateness, but of deliberation, having something pondered upon them before I came to you, neither doe I speak the words of lightnesse, as though I would say a thing this houre, and fall from it the next; but I speake that which I will stand too, and live and die by, humbly submitting my body to your pleasure*: so being commanded to withdraw, I said, *Gentlemen, I humbly crave to make one desire more to you, which is, that you will bee pleased to give mee a Copy of your QUESTION, and mine owne ANSWER, but it was denied*; and so I withdrew.

Now what the Issue of all this will bee, the Lord knows, for my part, I may justly say in the words of the Prophet *Esai.* chap. 59. 14. &c. *Therefore Judgment is turned backward, and Justice standeth afarre off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter, yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evill, maketh himself a prey: but the Lord saw it, it displeased him, that there was no Judgment, and when he saw that there was no man, he wondered, that none would offer himself, therefore his arme did save it, and his righteousnesse it self did sustaine it; for he put on righteousnesse as a brest-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head, and hee put on the garments of vengeance for cloathing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak, and will repay fury to his adversaries, and recompence to his enemies.*

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Time was when the Parliament had to doe with the King, and had the Bishops, Starre-chamber, and High Commission to pull downe, they would owne me, and doe me Justice, yea, so high in their thoughts was I once, that the very day and houre the King caused me to be arraigned for my life, before the whole House of Peers about the Earle of *Strafford*, the King himself sending my Accusation against me, which was upon the 24. of *May*, 1641. Yet notwithstanding, the House of Commons owned me, and then made these Votes for me, 1. *That the Sentence of the Star-chamber given against me, is Illegall, and against the Liberty of the Subject, and also bloody, wicked, cruell, barbarous, and Tyrannicall.* 2. *That repairations ought to be given me for my imprisonment, sufferings & losses sustained by that illegall sentence.*

But having served their owne turnes of me, I never could have Justice from them since, though I thinke I have been as faithfull a servant to the Common-wealth as any they ever imployed, and bid defiance to all men in the world, to brand or tax mee with unfaithfulnesse; and whereas *Magna Carta* saith, *Justice and Right we will deny to none, nor we will deferre to none*, yet have I awayted these 4. yeeres upon them, at great expenses, and cannot get them to put their owne Votes in execution; and if this be according to *Magna Carta*, let the World judge.

And now of late I have followed them above these 6. monethe, to the expence of about 100l. to get a Petition read, that I might have Justice, and something of that which is mine owne, to pay my debts, and buy me and mine bread, and have made all the freinds I could in the House, but as I conceive, I have been denied Justice & Right; and two severall times have I been with the Speaker himself, at his owne house, humbly to crave his assistance. But so lofty and high was hee, that hee would not so much as looke upon me, or speak with me, though I waighted upon him to his very Coach, and within two or three dayes after I had been with him, finding no compassion at all, printed my Petition, and at the House of Commons doore delivered above 150. Copies thereof to the Members, as they went in, and yet for all that, could not get it read in the House; whereupon, as one of my last hopes, I went downe to the Army upon Munday was a Month, (of purpose to my honoured Freind, Lieutenant Generall *Cromwell*, who formerly had taken compassion on me in my bands, and

under God, was the principall instrument to get me my liberty from my long Captivity by the Bishops, I say I went downe to him to get his Letter to some of the Members here, to desire them to help forward my businesse; which I accordingly procurred, and have delivered the Originall, and Copies of it to divers Members of the House, a true Copy whereof I have sent you here enclosed, and I professe, the getting of this Letter was the end of my going downe to the Army, and my joyrney, going, staying, and continuing, cost me above 10.l, divers of my freinds of good qalitie there, desiring me to stay till they had some engagement, that so I might be the joyfull Messenger of good tydings, to the Parliament, they conceiving thereby, that that would be a principall meanes to help forward my businesse that I was negotiating in the House, which was nothing but that I might have justice, and injoy the fulfilling of the Parliaments own Votes and Ordinances.

Extraordinary hard I rode about 150. miles, the way I came in a strange Countrey, and amongst many hazards at my own cost and charges, and brought up the first Letters that came from any fighting Officers that I could hear of, and gave the House a true and punctuall Relation of the businesse, according to what mine owne eyes saw, and at the desire of some of the Members, put it in writing, and afterwards in Print, and for my recompence, I enjoyed nothing but jeares, scoffes, and abuses, and that eminently, but what the ground of all this should be, I know not, unlesse it be because I neither love a slave nor fear a Tyrant; and upon Friday next after my comeing home, I came to *Westminster* (about my businesse, not so much as thinking of any thing they were debating of in the House, my thoughts being only of my Petition, and honourable *Cromwells* Letter) where I met with one Mr. *Robinson* accidentally, just as I came into the Hall about 12. a clock, who told me of a businesse concerning Col. *Hollis*, which I immediately communicated to Mr. *Samuel Gosse*, then standing hard by me, which he the said *Robinson* repeated over and over againe and again, and Mr. *Gosse* took notice of it, which we without any designe in the world (saving the discharge of our duty) made knowne to some Members of the House, which relation that we made, Mr. *Robinson* ownes, and saith he will justifie it to death, and for which he is since committed to *Ely* House.

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The lyes and reproaches that are since cast upon me by divers great ones, forceth me to give you this short account of it; It is looked upon by some, as though I designed it in the Army, (and truly jugglers of late have got a fine device to blinde the eyes of the World, by loading honest men with Reproaches, as he is an Independent, and therefore nothing must be given eare unto that he saith, though never so true,) but I protest before the presence of the God of heaven and earth, I had not one word of discourse upon it in the Army; others say, That I hired Mr. *Robinson* to it, which is the most notorious lye in the world, and which practise is so detestable to me, that I wish with all my soule, that all the practisers of such baseneſſe were hanged, (it may be the rayſers of such a lye, are versed in such godleſſe-like wayes, and therefore take the boldneſſe to square other men by their own Rules) for all that I said to Mr. *Gosse* was this, after we had been with Mr. *Robinson* at the Dogge Taverne, to drink a pint of Wine, I spake to Mr. *Gosse* to this effect; that Mr. *Robinson* had been imployed by my Lord Generall *Essex*, Alderman *Pennington* and others as an Intelligencer in the Kings quarters, and did my self and other prisoners in *Oxford* good service in our straights, by sending our Letters to London for us, &c. and I believed he was now in the condition of many others (that have done the Parliament good service) very poore, and if Mr. *Gosse* would be an instrument to help him to any imployment about the Excise, whereby he might get a subsistence, I told him it would be added of Charity to a man in want, as I conceived him to be; and if this be to hire *Robinson*, who had declared his Relation before ever I spake a Word of this to Master *Gosse*, I leave every rationall man to judge; nay, I averre this for truth, that Mr. *Robinson* was so forward to declare it, both now and formerly unto me, without my speaking or desiring, or the promising of any curteſie in the world for the doing of it; and I doe verily beleeve, he is a man that in his soul hates such baseneſſe.

Upon Saturday, the 19. of July, I came againe to the Parliament, which morning there came three Citizens downe from London, namely Mr. *Perry* a Draper, and one of his neighbours in *Dowgate*, and one Mr. *Worly*, that lives about *Moore-Feilds*, to *Westminster*, and for my part, I neither knew their buſineſſe, nor intentions, for they were a giving in their informations before

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Foure Members of the House of Commons, namely Col. *Rigby*, Sir *Walter Earle*, Col. *Long*, and *Mr. Corbit*, before I knew what they were about, though I confesse, I have often in London heard of such a businesse conserning Sir Iohn *Lenthall* and the Speaker, &c. as they were giving information of, which was known to thousands of Citizens by the hearing of the eare, and I confesse, when I heard Mr. *William Pendred* speak first of them, hee spake so freely of them, being of so great consernment, that I Professe I was affraid to heare any more; yet it seems Dr. *Bastwick*, (a man that stands obliged to me with as many tyes of freindship and respect, as I am confident he doth to any man in the world, for whom I have often, both in England and Holland, adventured my life, and all that was mine, and for whose sake and cause, as an earthly instrument I underwent all the sorrowes & miseries that I suffered from the Bishops, for divers yeares together,) sent in a paper to the Speaker, to informe him that I had accused him for sending 600001. to *Oxford*, though with the said Dr. *Bastwick*, (to my remembrance) I had not any discourse as all about any such busines, for the discource I had about that busines, was with Lieutenant Col. *Roe*, the Scout Master Cenerall of the City, whom I brought up out of the Garden, to the aforesaid three Citizens, that had newly given in their information under their owne hands: Mr. *Worly*, one of the three, being Lieu. Col. *Roes* old acquaintance, told him more then (I am confident of it,) by many degrees, then before he had from me; yet (as I am informed) upon Dr. *Bastwicks* paper barely, the Speaker got a Vote (before I ever knew any thing, though I all day waited upon the Parliament) to passe the House in these words.

Die Sabbati 19. *July*, 1645.

*REsolved upon the Question, by the Commons Assembled in Parliament, that Lieutenant Colonell* Lilburne *be forthwith taken into custody by the Sergeant at Armes attending this House, and so kept till the House take further order.*

To the Sergeant of Arms attending on this house, or to his deputy, &c. } *H. Elsyng* Cler. Parl. d. Com.

By meanes of which Vote, I am committed to Prison, before ever I was heard speake, though all day, at (or within call of) the doore, and though a man in all my actions firme for the Com-

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tion wealth, yet committed I know not wherefore, which is contrary (as I conceive) to the true intent of *Magna Carta*; and to that juſt practiſe that was amongſt the very Heathen *Roman* Governours, who ſay, *Acts* 25. 27. that it ſeemeth unreaſonable, to ſend a priſoner, and not withall to ſignifie the crimes laid againſt him: by meanes of which I am ingaged whether I will or no in a buſineſſe which I had no finger in, the proſecuting whereof (as I conceive) I am now tyed to have an eye to, but I thinke, that at the concluſion of it, if the Speaker ſit downe and reckon the gaines he will get by his ſo unwiſely medling with me, and ſo unwarrantably committing me to priſon, he will not be three-halfepence the richer for it, for I am confident that God will make good what he hath ſaid, which is, that he will puniſh the world *for their evill, and the wicked for their iniquity, and he will cauſe the Arroganey of the proud to ceaſe, and will lay low the haughtineſſe of the terrible, for behold the day of the Lord commeth, cruell both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land of wickedneſſe deſolate: and to deſtroy the ſinners thereof out of it*, Iſai. 13. and as the ſame Prophet ſaith, chap. 26. *for although favour be ſhewed to the wicked, yet will he not learne righteouſneſſe: in the land of uprightneſſe will he deale unjuſtly, and will not behold the Majeſty of the Lord.* Yea, ſaith the Prophet, *though the hand of the Lord be lifted up, they will not ſee: but they ſhall ſee, and be aſhamed for their envie at the people, yea, the fire of thine enemies ſhall devoure them; but as for thoſe that walk uprightly*, he ſaith, *the meek ſhall increaſe their joy in the Lord, and and the poore amongſt men ſhall rejoyce in the holy One of Iſrael*; and one reaſon is, *becauſe the terrible one is brought to nought, and the ſcorner is conſumed, and all that watch for iniquitie ſhall be cut off; whoſe practiſe it is to make a man an offender for a word, and to lay ſnares for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aſide the juſt for a thing of nought*, Iſa. 26, 19, 20, 21. I intreat you read what God ſaith of ſuch men in the next chapter, from verſe 9. to 15.

For my part, though I heare bayle will not be taken for me, ſo great is my crime, though yet I know it not, nor am not convicted of any, and though I heare that my perſon is ſo odious in the eyes of many great ones, that ſome of them thought there was ground for committing Col. *Ruſſel* and Col. *Ireton* &c. for talking with me in the Court of Requeſts upon Saturday laſt, although they were not able to mention one word that we ſaid;

oh but my busineſſe was an Independant plot, and they were talking with me, and that was crime enough for them to be commited; O brave times! and brave juſtice! and yet for all this I ſay, my reſolution is to ſtand faſt in the Libertie and freedome wherewith *Magna Carta* and the *Petition of Right*, and ſeverall Acts made this preſent Parliament, as alſo divers late Declarations, hath made me free, and not to be intangled againe with any yoke of Bondage, that ſhall be hung about my neck, by any kind of Tyrant, by what name or Title ſoever he be dignified or diſtinguiſhed; and though men be never ſo great, mighty, and Potent, that ſhall ſet themſelves againſt me, to deſtroy me, contrary to Law, Equity, Juſtice and Conſcience, I ſhall not feare ten thouſand of them, put them altogether, becauſe my confidence and hope is in him, that hath ſaid to all thoſe that are his *Feare thou not, for I am with thee: be not diſmaied, for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee, yea I will help thee: yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteouſneſſe. Behold all they that were incenced againſt thee ſhall be aſhamed and confounded: they ſhall be as nothing, and they that ſtrive with thee ſhall periſh: Thou ſhalt ſeeke them, and ſhalt not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that warre againſt thee ſhall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, ſaying unto thee feare not, I will help thee, Feare thou not thou worme Jacob, and yee men of Iſrael, I will help thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy one of Iſrael. Behold I will make thee a new ſharpe threſhing inſtrument, having teeth: Thou ſhalt threſh the mountaines, and beat them ſmall, and ſhalt make the hills as chaffe? Thou ſhalt fan them, and the wind ſhall carry them away, & the whirlewind ſhall ſcatter them: and thou ſhalt rejoyce in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Iſrael.* Iſa. 41. 1 ver. to 16.

*Deare freind*, I never thought before now, to have had the cauſe (with ſorrow & grief) from the Parliament, to have expreſſed my ſelf in ſuch ſad and complaining lines, conſidering my thoughts have been ſo high of them, that if I had had ten thouſand lives at the beginning of this War, I ſhould have ventered them all for them, yea, if it had been to have ſtript my ſelf to my very ſhirt, though I had not left my wife and family wherewith to have ſubſiſted; becauſe they began and went on ſo gallantly in ſuch an impartiall way of Juſtice, but now methinks, I am at a ſtand, ſeeing the ſtream is turned, and for my part, I may cry out with ſadneſſe

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of Spirit; it runs with a full current. About 4 years agoe, they sent me to have reparations for all my sufferings, with the estates of all my enemies in their hands by sequestrations, having some that sit in both Houses, and one or two that are at their homes by their Protection, and yet I cannot get a penny; an Ordinance or Declaration they made at the beginning of these Wars, that what Person soever should loose any of their Estates for their reall affection to the Parliament, they promise to make them reparations. In their service had I been, and like a man of resolution, adventured my life before I was carried Prisoner to *Oxford*, where for almost a yeer I with full courage and resolution, contemned no small proffers of worldly honour and glory, comming from the King himself, by the hands of four severall Lords, and underwent as many sorrows I think as was almost possible for one man to doe, lying sick amongst other miseries 4. or 5. dayes speechlesse, in the mean time being ruined in my estate, to the value of 6. or 700l. that I left behind me at *London*, which I can clearly make appear, but not a penny recompence have I had to this day.

After my deliverance, I served under my Lord of *Manchester*, where, and with whom I adventured my life as freely as any man in the Army, and the best requitall that I got at his hand, was an earnest endeavor by him to hang me, for taking *Tickel* Cattle from the Cavaliers, of all whose proceedings towards me in that particular, I divers Moneths agoe gave punctuall information under my hand to Mr. *Lisle*, that was Chayre-man for the businesse betwixt him and Lieutenant Generall; but I can heare nothing of it, unlesse it be notched upon the tally, to pay me with an unwelcome and undeserved requitall, and though plunderers, false musterers, lewd and deboyst persons had their pay very well by him, yet into my debt he and the State doe still run, that while I was under his command about 700l. and for any thing I can perceive, I am likely to be paid at *Domes-day* in the afternoone though the Association (as I have been informed) made very good payment to him, and besides all this Mr. *Prynne* writ books, and the Parliament licensed them, wherein he pressed to have those destroyed and cut in pieces, which hee stiles *Indigwidents*, &c. for all the good service they had done the Kingdom, and poor I, being overwhelmed in my spirit at the perusall of them, knowing my own integrity and uprightnesse (as also all the rest of those he defames) towards our native Country, though I had been silent from the be-

sinning of the Parliament to that very day, and had not in print medled or made with the Controversies of the Church (as they call them) and then by his unspeakable slanders, wicked, bloody and un-English-man-like provocations, having written Book upon book against me and my harmlesse Brethren, tending cauſelesly to our utter ruine and destruction.

For preventing of which, I writ to him an Epistle in one sheet of paper, which I sent to him by the hands of one *Ralph Wilson*, who delivered it into his own hands, the very night I sent it, which was three or foure dayes before it was printed, as not long since I declared to his face before the *Committee of Examinations*, and offered to prove it also, yet he both then and since, in his late *Fire-brand* book, *pag.* 34. most lyingly, just *William Prynne*-like, affirms that it was sent to the Presse, and published in Print before either he read it, or peruled it, which is most false: for as I told the Committee, I having sent it him in writing, as before hee remaining silent, and returned me no Answer in three or foure dayes, according to my earnest desire, his very silence moved me to print it; and of this very false affirmation he was then ashamed, and durst not goe on to bide the proof of it, but put it off with one of his sophisticall tricks, and also before the Committee at this very time to his face, I challenged him hand to hand, to dispute upon any one Proposition he would pitch upon in the whole Letter, and referre my self to the Committee themselves to be Judges, and and would stand to their judgement, but the Paltry *Simpleton* declined it, and durst not joyn issue, and yet of late, in his *Gunpowder-book*, railes and reviles me for that very Letter, as though nothing would quench his inflamed fiery thirst, but my deerest blood?

And about this very busines, it seems he was the man that got justice *Whittiker* to commit me to custody about the 14. of *May*, before that either I knew my accuser, or my accusation, or was heard to speak one word for my self, though the Order of the House (by vertue of which that Committee examined me about that busineſſe) was only to summon me; & upon Tuesday I gave in my defence in a whole sheet of paper, under my own hand, according to the Committees owne direction, which was so satisfactory to them, that they bade me goe home about my busineſſe, and if Mr. *Prynne* should never call upon it again, I was discharged, which so far as I can judge, hee never durst doe; and then comes out Doctor *Baswicks* fire and Gun-powder, touch'd with

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*William Prynnes* match-book, in the Preface of one of which he tells us, *that it is the daily discourse of the Independants, &c. That they have the sword now in their hands, and they scorne to be beholden to the Parliament for their liberty of Conscience, for they will have it whether they will or no, with their swords, and that they long for nothing so much, as for the cutting of all the Presbyterians throats*, with abundance of such like expressions, of very dangerous consequence, therefore I would Dr. *Bastwick* would name the men, that have so said, and produce his witnesses, and let them come to a speedy tryall, that they may receive their due deserts for their pains, or else that Dr *Bastwick* may receive it for them, for scandalizing of them; I think it is very strange, that the Parliament should suffer none but such books to come out by their owne Authority, and not to cause the Authour to produce the speakers or movers of such Sedition, but suffer them *cum privilegio*, in generall termes to come abroad, and then punish innocent men, for their just vindicating their reputations.

Truly, if this be just, I have lost my judgment, and must begin to re learn *A.B.C.* again, this I say made me, to publish my reasons containing my just defence in print, which I had given in to the Committee of Examinations, *May* 17. 1645. against which, if *Wil. Prin* can take any just advantage, methinks if he were but a rationall man, (being so great & dear to authority, as he boasts himself to be) he would not do as he doth, raile *Rabshekah* like, but have made his Reply to it before the Committe, where I am yet ready about that businesse, or any other he can justly lay to my charge, to meet him there; but he letting that sleep as he doth, makes me beleeve that he judgeth it a true opener of his base unworthines, which he is not willing to have ript more open, therfore he passeth by that, & within a little space, (as was certified after) I was again imprisoned, he informing that I was the Author of *MARTINS* books, and then Justice *Whittiker* sends another Warrant to imprison me before ever I knew my accuser, or my accusation, or ever was heard or suffered to speak in mine own defence, and when I came before the Committe, to know what they had to say to me, I was commanded to withdraw, and my adversary *Prynne*, hee stayes within, as usually he doth at all other times, which in my apprehension is not so faire nor equall; the meanest man in the Kingdom that is a free-man, having as great an interest in the priviledges of a free-man, as *Wil. Prynne* hath; and in again I was called, and told I must waite againe to morrow; I expressed my self againe and againe unto them, *To give me leave to declare but one thing to them, but heard I could*

*not be till about two houres after, waiting at the doore, bemoaning and crying out to those that stood by, of the sad and deplorable condition, that I and the rest of the free People in England are fallen into, to be so unjustly imprisoned, for the expence of our blood for the just preservation of our just freedoms, that wee should from Committees of PARLIAMENT themselves be imprisoned we know not wherefore, and when we come before them, according to their own commands, that wee shall be remanded back againe, and not suffered to speak one word for our selves: Hear O heavens, and give eare O earth, and thou righteous God that lovest Justice and Judgement, and hatest and abhorrest oppression and cruelty, which makest wise men mad, put forth thy hand, and doe Justice thy self upon the unjust and unrighteous Judges of this age,* whom the people have set up for their good, namely to preserve their Lives, Liberties and Estates, as their faithfull Stewards and servants, *and yet destroy what they would seem to maintaine.*

For my part, I look upon the House of Commons, as the supream Power of *England*, who have residing in them that power that is inherent in the people, who yet are not to act according to their own wills and pleasure, but according to the fundamentall Constitutions, and Customes of the Land, which I conceive provides for the safety and preservation of the People, unto whom I judge I am bound in Conscience to yeeld either active or passive obedience, that is to say, either to doe what they command, or to submit my body to their pleasure, for not yeelding active obedience to what I conceive is unjust. And truly, I should much desire to know of you, what you conceive of the Committee of *Examinations*; For either it is a Court of Justice, or no Court of Justice, and either it is tyed unto Rules, or not tyed; but if it be a Court of Justice, and tyed unto Rules, when it sits upon criminall causes betwix man and man, concerning life, liberty or Estate, of al which, they there take cognizance: me thinks they should observe the method of other Courts of justice, and that which they themselves did in all or most of their Committees at the beginning of this Parliament, that the doores might be open to al the free People of *England* that have a desire to be present to see what they say or doe, not kept close to keep out mens freinds, & suffer their enemies to be in, and that men should have the liberty of *Magna Carta, and the Petition of Right*, for which I have fought for all this while, and not be examined upon interrogatories concerning our selves, as wee used to be in the *Star-Chamber and High-Commission*, and for refusing to answer, to be committed.

For

*For my particular, I was condemned in the Star-Chamber, meerly for refusing to be examined upon Interrogatories, in the very same nature, as I am now by the Parliament; then I knew very well, that by the very law of nature I was bound not to betray my selfe: and the House of Commons, May 4. 1641. have voted since, that that very Sentence was* illegall, and unjust, and against the liberty of the Subject, *and yet now, walke in the very selfe same stepes themselves, and build up againe that, which by that Vote they formerly destroyed: I beseech you marke it, for they remanded me the other day backe to Prison; for refusing to Answer to their Interrogatories, and have done the same with divers others, as namely* John Turner *for one, now Prisoner in* Westminster, *he knowes not for what, and so hath been about 30. weeks. I protest, I speake from my very soule and conscience, I am in such a strait and snare, I know not well what to say or doe, I would not for all the world, cost it me hanging, drawing, burning, cutting in pieces, or what ever can be done unto me, sinne against my owne Conscience, in basely and cowardly betraying my* Liberty, and the Liberty of this free Nation, *for which I have contested these eight yeares against all the unjust and Arbitrary Powers in England, neither would I willingly contest with the Parliament, if with the peace of a good conscience I could any wayes tell how to avoyd it; I conceive, when they have private things concerning the discoveries of Treasons against the State, and the like, to be examined, there is a great deale of reason it should not have so large an extent as the foresaid cause; I pray let me speedily injoy your most serious thoughts about it in writing, which I shall take as a great favour and kindnesse.*

Upon the thoughts of these things the other day, when the Sergeant at *Armes* came to proffer me some kindnesses, for which I told him I would thanke him when I injoyed them from him, which I never yet did in my life, and after much talke with him, I began in my owne thoughts to ponder and consider with my self, what was the reason and ground that made my Lord *Say*, and honest Colonell *Hambden* wage Law with the King in the dayes of old, I presently answered my self, it was because the King walked contrary to *Magna Carta*, and the *Petition of Right*, and oppressed them contrary to the true intent and meaning thereof, the consideration of which moved me amongst divers other things, to ask him this question; Mr. Sergant I pray tell me, what was the reason wherefore the Earle of *Strafford* and *Canterbury* lost their heads? Saith hee, I doe not know; well then Sir, if you doe not know, I will tell you, that it was because they troad

*Magna*,

*Magna Carta* (which *I* read unto him) under their feet, and indeavored to rule by their own wills, & so to set up an arbittary Government; therefore Sir, I beseech you, doe your Mr, the *Speaker* that favour, as present my service to him, and tell him that *I* desire him and the rest of his freinds, to take heed they doe not walke in their steps, if they doe, tell him *I* say, they are as accountable for their actions & doings, although being members of the house of Commons, as the other were who were Members of the House of Peers, and truly Mr. Sergeant, tell him *I* wonder with what face he & the rest can denie me Justice, and so long keep me from my monney, who have adventured my life, Estate, and all that is deare unto me for the good of them, and the Commonwealth, that they might sit in peace and quietnesse at home to doe justice and right according to the duty of their places, and that that is expected from them by those that betrusted them to be their Stewards and servants; and many of them take to themselves 3l. 10s. a week, and some of them more, and others great Places worth 500l. 1000l. 1500l. 2000l. and more *per annum*, and live in as great pompe, superfluity and bravery, as ever they did in their dayes, by the ruines of the people, when thousands, that have spent all they have in the world, and done the Kingdom good service, have not a bit of bread to put in their mouths, but what they borrow money to buy withall, and many poor Widdows & Fatherlesse children, that have lost their husbands & fathers in the publick service, by crying at their doors, Bread Bread, and ready to curse them all to their faces, and they have no bowells of compassion towards them, O Sir, tell them from me, *I* say the cry of the Widdow and Fatherlesse, the poor and needy, the oppressed, and the afflicted, will cry lowd in the ears of the Lord of Hosts against them, and theirs, for judgement and vengeance.

*When I seriously consider the multitudes of those oppressions, in the City of* London, *and all the Countreys in the Kingdome, that lie upon the poor Common People, who are as a prey to all sorts and kinds of men, that are in authority and Office, and have none to complaine to, to have redresse from Great ones, being so linked together, that meddle with one, and presently they all ingage in it, and instead of a just redresse, indeavour to crush by Power and greatnesse the honest and wronged complainer, and by tricks to blast his reputation; and when I seriously consider the many windings and turnings in that Army where I first served, and others of the like nature elsewhere, which to my self I have made Observations upon, I am ready to think with my self, that when the King went away from* London, *he took not all his freinds away with him, but left some behind him here, to*

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*play his game for him, namely to weary out, and to oppresse and tyer the people, (that so they may long for Peace upon any termes in the World, though never so injust and unsafe,) that he may in an undiscerned way, effect that by policy, which before the Warres he was not able by Power to accomplish, namely, to set himself down in the full state of a Tyrant, to rule by his owne will, over the Lives, Liberties and Estates of the free People of* England, *who now contending for their Liberties, which is their birth-right and Inheritance, yet amongst those that would be thought their freinds, are rob'd, plundred, spoyled, opprest, undone and destroyed by all sides, and no remedy left for redresse, but the little ones to be eaten up of the great ones in every place, which makes poore mens lives a burthen to them, that they are ready to wish themselves back againe in* Egypt, *in their bondage, and rather* to have one Tyrant then many, *the which if the King could accomplish, he had done his worke, for then he might put his foot into the stirop, and get up into the saddle againe, without any fear of being dismounted, and might fall afresh to switching and spurring the poore tyred horse, by Courts as bad as* Counsell-Table, Star-chamber, or High-Commission, *thereby, and by* Monopolies, *and other wayes as bad as* Ship-money, *make him sweat out his grease; and alasse the poore horse is so tyred out, that hee hath not any ability at all left to throw off his rider, though he abuse him never so much, having already been so harrased,* (even by those that would have been juged his freinds,) that hee hath lost his courage, his strength, his stomack, and his legges, being thereby so farre from being able to dismount his rider, that he is scarce able to goe a foot-mans pace; Oh for *Justice*! Justice betwixt a man and his neighbour, impartially, without respect of persons, which alone under God is the only cure of all *Englands* maladies, and without which the free people of this Kingdome are insensibly destroyed, and undone irrecoverably.

Upon the writing of this, I have brought to my view *Wil. Prynnes* new blasing *Fire-brand* book, and casting mine eye upon it, I cannot but wonder at the simplicity of the besotted man, who formerly was so mad at *Young MARTINS* books, that he indeavoured to get every body to prison that medled or made with them, and indeavoured by all wayes and means to have them suppressed, yet now hee himselfe publisheth all the chief things in all his books, to the view of thousands that durst not meddle with them before, and yet now in his book may read them all in their shops or houses, and make themselves merry with them, by *Will. Prynnes* means, *cum privilegio*; surely the man is out of his wits, God having made good that in *Esai.* 29. 14. upon him, where he saith, that he *will make the wisedom of men to perish, and the understanding of the prudent*

to be had; surely he hath done his masters that set him at work more disservice by this one book, then ever hee did them good by all the books that ever he writ for them; For in his *Epistle to the Parliament*, he keeps a mighty raying against his Adversaries, (just *Rabshekah*-like) crying, and calling for justice against them, yea closely taxing the Parliament for not doing justice upon them, for abusing of them by their bookes, which comes but out by stealth in holes and corners, without publick lisence, and yet he himself in this his one book (which I conceive is put out by Parliamentary Authority,) most grosly abuseth the Parliament, and the free people of *England*, and gives the greatest advantage to his antagonists, that possible can be given; amongst other things, I will instance that busines of Sir *Sam. Luke*, who hath complained to the Committe of *Examinations* of Cap. *Paul Hobson*, and Cap. *Rich. Beamond*, the businesse having only proceeded thus far, that Sir *Sam. Lukes* witnesses are examined, and as the Defendants tell me, the maine things he layes to their charge, is only proved by one witnesse, (who they say, is as base and vild as a man can be) and contradicted by foure or five of Sir *Sam. Lukes* own witnesses, and not one of the Defendants witnesses so much as examined, though indeed the Committee hath sent for them; and the Defendants tell me, upon the Examination of them, they doe not doubt but evidently, and cleerly to make it appear, that the grand things laid to their charge, are meer forgeries and untruths, the substance of which you may read in the 4. 5. & 6. pag. of *Prynnes* Epistle to the Parl. and in the 13. pag. of his book; now I say, for *Wil. Pryn* the Lawyer, but rather the *grand-lyer*, (that would be thought one of the wisest men in the world, though indeed hee be one of the arrantest *Fooles* and *Idiots*,) to take upon him, during the very time that a busines is dependant before a Committee of Parliament (in which his book, he involves so many Persons of eminency, quallity, and approved fidelity in the Kingdom,) and before the busines be one halfe heard, or any part of the Defendants defence made, or any one of their witnesses examined, the Defendants themselves stifly averring that the main things charged upon them are notorious lyes, forgeries & falshoods, which they will undertake with the hazard of the losse of their lives cleerly to make appear; now for *Wil. Pryn* to take upon him to medle with a busines depending before a Committee of Parliament, before they have either judg'd it, or half heard it, to passe sentence upon it, and condemne the partie, yea, to lash at the Parliament, for not doing justice upon them, before they have condemn'd them, and to publish this to the view of the World, with abundance of lyes and slanders, not only against the Parties themselves, but also against Honourable Sir *Tho. Fair-*

fax, and Honorable *Cromwell*, and divers other chief Officers in the army, to whom the whole Kingdome owes so many Obligations of Honour and respect unto for all their faithfulnesse and good service done them, is so unsufferable, unwarrantable, unjust, and abusive, as I think was never done by any to the Parliament since they sate, besides Mr. *Pryn*, and I am confident, if I should have done as much as he hath in that book, & have been such a *fire-brand* as there he is, I should hardly escape *Tyburne*; for whereas he chargeth the Defendants for saying, that Sir *Tho. Fairfax*, and all the Colonells in the Army, was ingaged in their designe ) by which words he endeavours to make the *Army* odious to the people, and so fit to be deserted by them, though their actions have fully declared (for all Mr. *Pryns*, and Dr. *Bastwicks* lyes and slanders) their faithfulnesse and candor to the Common-wealth,) who, I am confident, are so upright and noble, that they would count it their greatest dishonour to countenance the greatest Colonell in the Army in any act of basenes whatsoever; and for the truth of that charge, the Defendants relate it thus to mee, That Sir *Samuel* sent them Prisoners to Sir *Thomas*, for meeting together the day after Sir *Thomas* his victory at *Nasby*, where they were a giving thanks to God for his goodnesse towards the Kingdom in generall, and his servants & people in particular by that Victory, and being conducted prisoners by Sir *Samuels* Marshall, and one of his Ensignes, with others, they did abuse the two Captaines as they went, and upon their complaint of it to Sir *Thomas*, and his *Counsell of Warre*, who examined it; the Honourable *Generall* signified it in a Letter to Sir *Samuel*, desiring him to vindicate his own Honour so farre, as to cashier the *Martiall* and *Ensign*, and upon the Captaines arrivall at *Newport* back againe, they were told, That seeing Sir *Thomas* and his Colonells would not doe justice, Sir *Samuel* would send them up to the Parliament, where he would have justice, unto which one of the Captaines replyed, Well, I will meddle no more in the busines, for now Sir *Thomas* and his Colonells are ingaged in it, at which one would catch advantage, whereupon Cap. *Hobson* immediately desired the people then present to take notise, he did not say nor meane, that they were ingaged to justifie them in their preaching, but being at *Newport* taxed for injustice, their honours laid at stake, which they were ingaged to vindicate, and this would be proved to be reall truth sufficiently; I cannot proceed for want of time any further with *Wil. Pryns* lyes and fooleries, but must referre them to another time, for a more particular Answer to him, wherein I doubt not but to take off his great brags of his superlative service that he hath done for the Kingdome, and shall Anatomise his distructive practises to the Common-wealth, in supporting

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ing Sir *Phil. Carteright*, the malignant Governour of *Jersey*, who by his means alone hath been as great an Instrument of the support of the King in his unjust warres, as any hath been in *England*. I shall likewise make it appear, that he hath been a Protector of those that have betrayed the strong holds of the Parlia. into the hands of the Cavaliers, and a pleader of all Malignant Priests Causes, and others that would see him well, and the pleader of Patents in point of Law, and judges practises as binding to the people, though against expresse acts of Parliament, and this he hath done lately before Committees of Parliament, the doing of which tends to the destroying of *Magna Carta*, and the *Petit. of Right*, the overthrowers or destroyers thereof being Traytors to the Commonwealth: but I shall no further proceed at present, but commit you to God, and rest your faithfull freind till Death, *JO. LILBURNE.*

*From my Captivity, I know not wherefore, at Mr.* Knights, *Attendant to the House of Commons. Friday*, July 25. 1645.

¶ A true Copy of Liev. Generall *CROMWELLS* Letter.

GEntlemen, *Being at this distance from* London, *I am forced to trouble you in a busines, which I would have done my self, had I been there; it is for* Liev. Col. Lilburne, *who hath done both you and the Kingdom good service, otherwise I should not have made use of such friends as you are: he hath a long time attended the House of Commons with a Petit. that he might have repairation according to their Votes, for his former sufferings and losses, and some satisfaction for his Arrears for his service of the State, which hath been a long time due unto him; To this day he cannot get his Petition read: his attendance hath proved very expensive, and hath kept him from other imployment, and I beleeve that his former losses, and late services, (which have been unchargeable) considered, he doth find it a hard thing in these times, for himself and his family to subsist; Truly, it is a grief to see men ruine themselves through their affection and faithfulnes to the Publick, and so few lay it to heart. It would be an Honour to the Parlia. and an encouragement to those that faithfully serve them, if provisions were made for the comfortable subsistence of those who have lost all for them. And I can assure you, that this neglect of those that sincerely serve you, hath made some already quit their Commands in this Army, who have observed often times their wives and children have begged, who have lost their limbs and lives in the Kingdoms service: I wish it were looked to betimes. That which I have to request of you is, that you give him your best Assistance to get his Petition read in the House, and that you will doe him all lawfull favour & Justice in it; I know he will not be unthankful, but adventure himself as freely in the Service of the Kingdom, as hitherto he hath done. Hereby you shall lay a speciall Obligation upon your servant, OLIVER CROMWELL.* July, *the* 10. 1645.

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